



**TESTIMONY OF
Jeffrey Shelton MD
Chairman, Department of Psychiatry
MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL
Wednesday, March 18, 2015**

**Governor's Bill No. 6856
An Act Concerning Substance Abuse and Opioid Overdose Prevention**

My name is Dr. Jeffrey Shelton and I have worked as a resident and attending psychiatrist in Connecticut for over ten years. I have worked at two different community hospitals since completing my training at Yale and currently serve as Chairman of Psychiatry at Middlesex Hospital.

I am here to testify that naloxone saves lives. Since I started prescribing naloxone, to my knowledge 10 potentially fatal overdoses have been reversed by prescriptions that I have written - and I am only one doctor. Anything we can do to increase access to this life saving medication will help in the fight against the epidemic of deaths from opiate overdose.

As a physician, I can tell you there are two important factors to this medication. First, is its impact on families. Nothing is more terrifying than having a loved one struggling with addiction - particularly addiction to opiates. I once saw a woman who came to me due to severe anxiety. She had a family member who was admitted to the ICU at St. Francis after a near fatal heroin overdose. She was concerned about not only this person's condition in the hospital but also that this person was supposed to come stay with her after she was released. She was terrified by the possibility that this person would overdose again and she would find her. It was great to be able to talk with her about naloxone and how empowering it was to her to learn about this medication and that she may be able to save her loved one's life in case of overdose.

Another important factor is that while I am a strong supporter that naloxone should be available to police and EMT, the reality is that the real first responders are the friends and family members of those who are struggling with addiction. Of the 10 overdoses which have been reversed by prescriptions that I have written - all have been by some who is either in recovery from addiction or who is still actively using. This is because they are around others who are using. These overdoses included a parent, a neighbor, a friend, and a child.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeffrey Shelton MD